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UNCLAS BANGKOK 006564

SIPDIS

STATE FOR EB/IPE

E.O. 12958: N/A

TAGS: [EAGR](#) [ECON](#) [ETRD](#) [KIPR](#) [WTO](#)

SUBJECT: THAILAND AND GI IN THE WTO

REF: SECSTATE 180474

¶1. On October 17, Emboff met with Deputy Director General Wiboonlasana Ruamraksa of the Department of Intellectual Property, and Trademark Office Director Pajchima Thanasant and presented talking points on upcoming WTO agriculture negotiations and geographical indications (GI) as requested in reftel.

¶2. DDG Wiboonlasana stated that while the EU proposal was not perfect, Thailand supported Article 23 extension for GIs in the WTO, and favored a multilateral registration system for GIs. Wiboonlasana explained that the cost of registration of Thai GIs abroad was expensive and Thailand would therefore be supportive of a system that would reduce costs. She was less concerned with the costs to Thailand that could result from the EU's more expansive proposal as Thailand did not to her knowledge produce any of the items that the EU wished to protect under geographical indications.

¶3. Wiboonlasana indicated that Thailand did not support inclusion of geographical indications in agriculture negotiations and agreed with the U.S. position that GIs should be considered in the TRIPS Council. However, she encouraged flexibility by the U.S. in TRIPS negotiations and warned that a lack of progress in TRIPS on GIs would inevitably hamper agriculture negotiations.

BOYCE